

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 8-B

WASHINGTON TIMES
25 September 1985

Agca changes his story on where he bought guns

ROME (AP) — Mehmet Ali Agca yesterday changed his testimony to Italian prosecutors on how he obtained the pistol he used to wound Pope John Paul II and said he now doesn't remember.

Agca has provided the basis for the trial of three Bulgarians and four Turks charged with complicity in the May 13, 1981, shooting of the Polish-born pontiff and has turned state's evidence. He has alleged that Bulgarians masterminded the shooting.

The Turkish terrorist is serving a life term for the attack on the pope and is also being tried on a separate charge of illegally importing a Browning pistol.

He has said previously he bought four identical weapons in Vienna in March 1981 from an Austrian arms dealer. The prosecution witness, Abdullah Catli, insisted he had bought two pistols from a Turk in Vienna and had given one to Agca.

Agca changed his story when pressed by Prosecutor Antonio

Marini to explain the contradiction.

"Well, I don't recall ... We were going to the place [to buy the pistols] but I stopped at a certain point ... Oral Celik told me he bought the guns from an Austrian," Agca said.

Mr. Celik, also charged with shooting the pope, is still at large and is being tried in absentia.

***"He [Mr. Catli] has
come here to ruin this
trial!"***

— Mehmet Ali Agca

Mr. Catli, on loan from France where he is imprisoned on forgery and drug charges, said a Turk who acted as an intermediary between him and the gun dealer can be summoned to verify his statement.

Mr. Catli, who is not charged in the alleged papal plot, has testified that Mr. Celik was watching televi-

sion at their home in Vienna when the shooting occurred.

Agca had testified Mr. Celik and two other Turks were with him in St. Peter's Square to assist in the assassination attempt.

Mr. Catli once headed the Idealists or Gray Wolves, a Turkish right-wing youth movement often accused of being involved in terrorism. Both Mr. Celik and Agca were active in the group.

"He [Mr. Catli] has come here to ruin this trial!" Agca shouted in Italian.

Judge Severino Santiapichi cautioned Agca not to interject things that had nothing to do with the trial.

Agca also admitted that he had sent money from Switzerland to Mr. Catli to buy the pistols. Asked by Mr. Marini where the money had come from, Agca smiled and replied: "From Bulgarians, through Bekir Celenk."

Mr. Celenk, under arrest in Turkey, is one of the two Turks being tried in absentia. Turkey has refused to extradite Mr. Celenk to Italy. The judge said last week he plans to take the court to Turkey early next month to question witnesses and possibly Mr. Celenk.

Only one of the three Bulgarians is in Italian custody.